

In The Claims

Please add the following new claims.

Sub C1
28. (New) An interconnect structure comprising:
a plurality of metal lines formed on a substrate;
low-k dielectric structures interposed between two or more of said metal lines;
a second dielectric material formed above said metal lines;
a protective layer interposed between said low-k dielectric structures and said second dielectric material; and
a conductive feature formed within said second dielectric material and said protective layer, said conductive feature in contact with at least one of said plurality of metal lines.

B1
29. (New) The interconnect structure according to claim 28, wherein said protective layer includes dielectric material.

Sub C2
30. (New) The interconnect structure according to claim 28, further comprising a liner.

31. (New) The interconnect structure according to claim 30, wherein said liner comprises a material selected from the group consisting of titanium, titanium nitride, tantalum, tantalum nitride, aluminum, copper, and tungsten nitride.

32. (New) The interconnect structure according to claim 28, further comprising a spacer interposed between said low-k material and said conductive feature.

33. (New) The interconnect structure according to claim 28, further comprising a spacer interposed between said low-k material and a liner.